

Playground & COVID-19

Visitor & User Guidance Document

Playgrounds around the United States and world have largely been closed during the COVID-19 pandemic. The National Program for Playground Safety supports these recommendations and encourages early childhood programs, schools, and communities to be attentive in our collective effort to slow the spread of the virus. The following is intended to compile useful information and reminders as our communities begin to lift restrictions for playgrounds and children’s play areas.

Follow State and Local Guidance as We Return to S.A.F.E.™ Play!

1: Don’t Forget Social Distancing (6+ ft and Avoid Overcrowded Areas)

Just because the playground is open does not mean that social distancing is no longer in effect. Understand your local community’s regulations and guidelines for social distancing. Playgrounds are a natural place for children to interact and have social interaction; therefore, it is important to find balance in providing children opportunities to play, while maintaining social distancing from those whom they have not had recent contact.

2: Playground Sanitation

It is important to recognize that each playground environment will be different. Just as maintenance intervals vary between playgrounds in normal circumstances, the maintenance of playground equipment and play equipment in the aftermath of COVID-19 will vary.

Coronaviruses naturally die in hours to days depending on surface and other conditions, however, they have been shown to be killed more quickly in warmer temperatures and sunlight. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance suggests that it is impractical and an inefficient use of resources to spray disinfectants on outdoor areas, and recommendations are simply to continue existing cleaning practices.

It is likely that some procedures, however, will call for increased frequency of maintenance and sanitation of equipment. NPPS encourages particular attention to be paid to high-touch surfaces, such as handrails with EPA approved disinfectants for COVID-19 and other pathogens.



3: Practice S.A.F.E.™ Play – and Pack Sanitizer & Sunscreen

While there are increased concerns over viral transmission, environmental health considerations have always been vital for our playgrounds. It is important to remember to emphasize **S**upervision, **A**ppropriate Environments, **F**all Surfacing, and **E**quipment Maintenance for **S.A.F.E.™ play**.

- **Always Supervise** children at play and report maintenance concerns. Playgrounds are the leading location for recreationally induced injuries to children.
- **Sanitize hands before, during, and after play sessions.** Understand that the equipment is only as clean as the previous users.
- **Use Sunscreen,** particularly during peak sun exposure (10am – 4pm). Sun exposure as a child is linked to many adult skin cancers.

4. CDC Guidance

If you desire more supporting information, particularly regarding sanitation of playgrounds for COVID-19, the CDC has issued several documents which provide guidance for practices involving, in particular, sanitation of outdoor areas.



Visit playgroundsafety.org to learn about playground injury prevention tips and what you can do to create S.A.F.E.™ and fun playgrounds.